

the fabrics break down into tiny little fibers that get added to the mix.

Have you ever rolled clay into little balls between your fingers? Well, that's exactly what your toes do with the dead skin cells, the sweat, and the sock fibers! Add a little dirt, picked up while you were padding around without shoes, and there you have it—*toe jam!* Delicious!

## BODY ODOR

Did someone just run over a skunk, or is that you? Quick! Stick your face in your armpit and take a whiff. Still standing? Must've been a skunk. At least this time.

### GET A WHIFF OF THIS

Why do our armpits—and various other body parts—get putrid when we don't bathe? What's the problem? Here's how it works.

Say you've been in-line skating or playing soccer and it's hot. The sweat is pouring off your head and dripping down your back. Lucky you! If you weren't sweating, you'd be a dead duck. When you get too warm—whether it's because it's 100 degrees in the shade, you've just run 20 blocks, or you've got a fever—your body has to find some way to cool down.

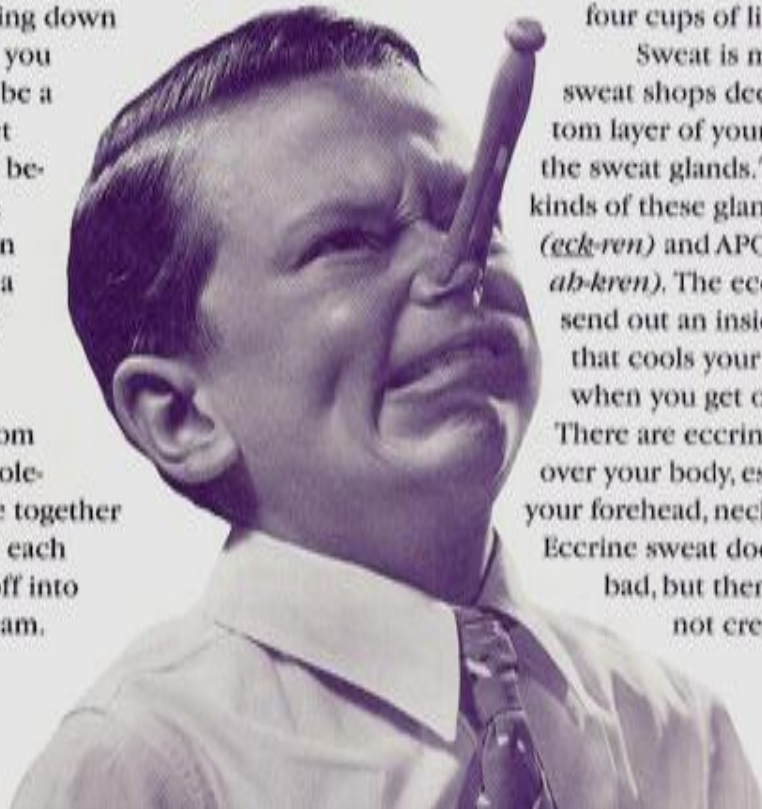
Ever watch your mom boil water? The water molecules, which are all close together at first, break loose from each other and start to float off into the air in the form of steam.

## Sweating for Dollars

Can you imagine paying money to sweat? There are grown-ups who will actually fork over big bucks to sit in a little room that has been heated to temperatures of close to 190 degrees. In steambaths and saunas, folks get to sit wrapped in a sweat-soaked towel and drip like a broken faucet for 10 or 20 minutes at a time. They think all that sweating helps to remove impurities from the body. All it really helps to do is sweat away water—water that will be replaced with the first couple of drinks they have! They might just as well flush a few dollars down the toilet. There's simply no accounting for grown-ups' tastes.

The water evaporates, making the kitchen air moister and warmer. Sweating works the same way. As water on the surface of your skin evaporates, it sends heat off into the air. On an average day, you'll sweat away four cups of liquid.

Sweat is made in little sweat shops deep in the bottom layer of your skin, called the sweat glands. There are two kinds of these glands—**ECCRINE** (*eck-ren*) and **APOCRINE** (*app-ab-kren*). The eccrine glands send out an inside-out shower that cools your skin down when you get overheated. There are eccrine glands all over your body, especially on your forehead, neck, and back. Eccrine sweat doesn't smell bad, but then, all sweat is not created equal. . . .



## OH, YUCK!



The apocrine glands are the skunky guys. These are the glands in your armpits, around your nipples, and in your underpants—places where there are a lot of hair follicles. The apocrine glands don't actually start to work until you hit the teenage years. Then, boy, do they start to make up for lost time! These glands get cooking at the worst possible times—just when you're about to take an important math test, or to ask that really cute kid out to a movie. When you're embarrassed or nervous, chances are good that your palms will get moist, your armpits will dampen, and beads of water might dot your forehead. And if you're not careful, you will *reek!*

The actual sweat—the water, salt, and urea (yup, the same stuff that helps make pee-pee)—has almost no smell. But the apocrine glands make sweat with a little oil mixed in. When this oily sweat

meets up with all the bacteria hanging out on the skin's surface, things start to heat up. Bacteria love that oil and salt mix (think french fries without the potatoes) and end up inviting all their friends to a party at the "Underarm Mall." And where there's bacteria, as you surely know by now, there's smelliness.

### TIME FOR A QUICK PIT STOP

So what do you do if you suspect you have problem pits?

First off, stop that bacteria in its tracks. Take a bath or shower every day and soap up with an antibacterial soap. Give your favorite T-shirt a wash between wearings, too.

One easy and quick way to snuff out

smelly pits is to splash rubbing alcohol under your arms.

Health-food stores sell pit sticks made from green tea, which is a natural antibacterial. And if all else fails, bring out the big guns . . . "no-stink" sticks like deodorant.

## THE PUTRID PAST

Have you ever run the water, filled up the tub, sat on the bathroom floor reading a magazine, and then mussed up the towels to make it look like you bathed? If so, you would have loved living in the 1400s! Remember Queen Isabella? The lady who launched Christopher Columbus on his voyage to the New World? She took only two baths in her entire life! Truth is, for about 400 years, taking a bath was considered disgusting, unhealthy, and downright bad for you.

You can just imagine what it smelled like back then! People throwing pails of pee into the street. No one washing their pits after a rough sporting event. You needed an iron nose to survive in those days. In fact, perfume was invented to cover up the odor!





Do you think these ladies pouring expensive perfume into their friend's bath are trying to tell her something?

Deodorants kill the bacteria that live under your armpits where it's warm and wet and oh so lovely. No bacteria? No smell!

Antiperspirant goes one step farther and actually shuts down sweat production. Aluminum salts build an invisible wall that keeps the sweat from reaching the surface (and the bacteria that wait there). But since it's made from strong chemicals, antiperspirant should be used only if nothing else is working.

## Sweat Stats

**N**ow you know almost everything there is to know about those damp spots. But you're not a perspiration pro just yet. Read on!

- ★ Ever wonder why the hottest places on earth serve the spiciest foods? That salsa or curry might burn your tongue, but it'll also cool down your body by revving up your sweat glands.
- ★ If you watch a lot of medical shows on TV, you might occasionally hear the paramedics who are rushing a patient into the emergency room yelling that the poor guy on the gurney is **DIAPHORETIC** (*dle-uh-fa-rett-ick*). That's a fancy way of saying that he's sweating all over. People having heart attacks sometimes have this symptom.
- ★ Is a "cold sweat" different from an hour-of-soccer-in-June sweat? Sure it is. People with illnesses sometimes break out in cold sweats, such as when the blood sugar levels of a person with diabetes get out of whack.
- ★ What do you think is the sweatiest part of your body? Nope. Not your armpits. It's your palms! The soles of your feet run a close second.

